

Message Text

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APPROVED BY S/S:ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 195440 TOSEC 090038

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FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 5556 ACTION SECSTATE AUG 18.

QUOTE: S E C R E T AMMAN 5556

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS, US, JO

SUBJECT: HAWK MISSILE SALE: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER

1. RIFAI ASKED ME TO SEE HIM MORNING AUGUST 18. WE
DISCUSSED SECVISIT FOR A FEW MINUTES (SEPTTEL).

2. HE THEN ASKED ME ABOUT THE PRESNET CLIMATE ON THE
HAWK MISSILE SALE. I SAID I HAD HEARD NOTHING TO
CHANGE MY VIEW THAT IS WAS ABOUT WHERE WE LEFT IT IN
JULY. THE SALE WAS FAR FROM WRAPPED UP, BUT
THAT THE EVENTS OF THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS WOULD BE MOST
IMPORTANT. WHEN I LEFT WASHINGTON IT WAS CLEAR THAT
THE SFRC DID NOT WANT TO PUSH THE ISSUE TO A VOTE.
RIFAI SAID THAT HE HAD RECIEVED PRIVATE WORK THAT THE
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ISSUE WAS LOST. I ASKED IF HE COULD NAME THE SOURCE,

AND HE SAID IT WAS PERSONAL INFORMATION. (COMMENT:
IN RETROSPECT I BELIEVE THIS COULD HAVE BEEN MERELY A
FEELER, OR PERHAPS THE SOURCE WAS THE SOVIET "SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE" -- SEE BELOW. END COMMENT).

3. RESPONDING I SAID THAT ANYONE WHO PRESUMED TO KNOW
WAS SUSPECT SINCE THE EVENTS OF THE NEXT FEW WEEKS COULD
BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF THE SALE.
I DID NOT WANT TO DISCOUNT THE PROBLEMS WE HAD EXPERIENCED,
NEITHER DID I THINK UNDUE PESSIMISM WAS THE ANSWER.
I ADDED I CERTAINLY HOPED THAT NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN ON
THEIR VISIT TO SYRIA WHICH WOULD GIVE THE SALE'S OPPONENTS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVIGORATE THE ATTACK.
RIFAI SAID HE WAS RELIEVED AND THEN ASKED IF
THE SALE GETS BLOCKED, COULD THEY HAVE ASSURANCES THAT
JORDAN COULD GO AHEAD AND BUY THE HAWKS COMMERCIALY.
I INDICATED THAT PERSONALLY I FELT THAT NO OPTIONS
SHOULD BE FORECLOSED PREMATURELY, BUT NEITHER SHOULD OR
COULD WE SETTLE ON A GAME PLAN FOR FUTURE CONTINGENCIES
IN THE ABSENCE OF KNOWING A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT
WHAT THE SITUATION IN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE AREA
MIGHT BE AT THE TIME WE HAD TO DECIDE ON THIS POINT.
IN ANY EVENT WITH YOUR TRIP COMING UP, THE WHOLE
QUESTION SHOULD BE DISCUSSED THOROUGHLY WITH YOU,
INCLUDING THE FUTURE RANGE OF OPTIONS OPEN TO US.
BY ALL MEANS THE ADMINISTRATION WAS COMMITTED TO THE
SALE AND WHAT WE WOULD DO IF THE PRESENT POSSIBILITY
OF AN FMS SALE WAS FORECLOSED BY CONGRESS WOULD BE
IN THE SPIRIT OF THAT COMMITMENT. RIFAI SEEMED
PLEASED WITH THIS APPROACH. I SAID I WOULD REPORT OUR
CONVERSATION IMMEDIATELY SO YOU WOULD KNOW OF HIS
INTEREST AND CONCERN.

4. HE THEN TOLD ME THAT THE SOVIETS HAS SENT AN
OFFICIAL TO TALK WITH THEM UNDER "PRAVDA" COVER.
THEY PRESUMED HE WAS A HIGH-LEVEL KGB OFFICER.
HE HAD ABOUT THREE HOURS WITH THE KING YESTERDAY
AND HAD AGAIN SURFACED THE SOVIET INTEREST IN
SELLING JORDAN AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. THE JORDANIANS HAD
AGAIN (ACCORDING TO RIFAI) HELD HIM OFF. I ASKED IF
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THE DISCUSSION HAD BEEN SPECIFIC AND WHETHER PRICES
AND AVAILABILITY HAD BEEN MENTIONED. RIFAI SAID NO
THAT HAD NOT HAPPENED. I THEN SAID THAT WE
APPRECIATED THEIR ACTION IN KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN FOR
THE HAWK SALE BY WAITING THE ADDITIONAL TIME. RIFAI
JUMPED IN WITH THE COMMENT THAT SUCH AN ACTION WAS
THE LEAST THEY COULD DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
THE SOVIET SALE WAS THE WORST ALTERNATIVE

AND THEY WANTED TO TRY TO AVOID IT IF THEY POSSIBLY
COULD DO SO. THAT IS WHY HE IS EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES
WITH US IF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT SHOULD FALL THROUGH.

5. SUBSEQUENTLY, RIFAI SHOWED ME THE TEXT OF A LETTER
THE KING IS PROPOSING TO SEND TO ALL SENATORS AND THE
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE AND RULES COMMITTEE. HE ASKED IF I THOUGHT
THE KING SHOULD ALSO SEND THE LETTER TO THE
CONFIRMED OPPONENTS -- CASE, ETC. MY REPLY WAS THAT IF
THE LETTER DID NOT THREATEN OR COULD NOT BE TURNED
AGAINST THE SALE IN THAT SENSE, THEN IT MIGHT BE
BETTER TO TREAT THE SENATE AS A GROUP RATHER THAN
TRYING TO BE SELECTIVE. THOSE WHO DID NOT RECEIVE THE
LETTER ON THE PREMISE THEY WERE AGAINST THE SALE
MIGHT RESNET IT AND THE IMPLICATION THEY DID NOT
HAVE AN OPEN MIND OR WERE NOT FLEXIBLE.

6. THE LETTER IS REASONABLY TOUGH, BUT NOT THREATENING.
THE KING SPEAKS PLAINLY AND FRANKLY AND RAISES THE
SOVIET ALTERNATIVE AS THE ONLY PRACTICAL RECOURSE,
BUT IN A "MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER" VEIN.
HE SPEAKS PLAINLY ABOUT HIS FEARS OF ISRAELI ATTACK,
BUT EMPHASIZES THE NON-AGGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF JORDAN-
IAN POLICY. I HAVE NOT TRIED TO ARGUE AGAINST THE
LETTER ON THE THESIS THAT THIS IS A CHOICE THE KING
HAS TO MAKE ON HIS OWN. HE IS WELL AWARE OF OUR FEARS
OF POSSIBLE BACKLASH ON THIS KIND OF THING.
RIFAI SAID THAT KING FEELS HE SHOULD LEAVE HIS
FRIENDS IN CONGRESS UNDER NO DOUBT ABOUT HIS PERSONAL
VIEWS AND STAND, IMPLYING THAT HE WOULD DO SO EVEN
IF IT MIGHT HURT KING SOMEWHAT WITH ONE PART OF THE
CONGRESS.

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PICKERING UNQUOTE SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, CAT-B, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY SALES, MISSILES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE195440
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FVORTIZ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: N750003-0275
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750843/aaaablq.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <03 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAWK MISSILE SALE: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER
TAGS: MASS, US, JO, (RIFAI, ZAYD)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006